

“After nearly 14 months of thoughtful and passionate debate, there are many opinions on what it means to reform health care. For me, it boils down to this: Who makes the important health care decisions in our country – patients, their families and their doctors, or insurance companies?

“With all the rumored and actual changes made to the health care bill, I was not willing to make a final decision on my vote until I saw the actual language in the bill to protect patients from losing their insurance coverage, from having their rates jacked through the ceiling, and from being denied coverage by insurance companies. I was also able to express my concern to the Administration that the implementation of any health care bill must take into account the unique challenges of the Valley’s farmers and seasonal agriculture workers.

“Having now seen the actual bill and after reviewing the fine print with constituent groups and health care professionals, I am satisfied that it will take life and death decisions away from the insurance companies and protect patient rights. The bill also ensures that patients and our families can receive essential treatment without fear of bankruptcy. That’s what healthcare coverage is supposed to do and is what the final language in the bill accomplishes. For these reasons, I will vote “Yes” on the health care reform legislation being considered by the House of Representatives.

“Health care reform is not about Washington. It’s about all the people across our Valley and the 28% uninsured in my Congressional District who are calling for commonsense solutions that will make their lives better. Our work on health care is far from over, but this bill is the first step.”

IMPACT ON THE VALLEY

Earlier this week, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce released a report on the impact that H.R. 4872 is expected to have on California’s 20th Congressional District, which is made up of over 740,000 residents. The following is a brief list of the findings:

- Improve coverage for 246,000 residents with health insurance.
- Give tax credits and other assistance to up to 156,000 families and 9,700 small businesses to help them afford coverage.
- Improve Medicare for 62,000 beneficiaries, including closing the donut hole.
- Extend coverage to 138,000 uninsured residents.
- Guarantee that 21,300 residents with pre-existing conditions can obtain coverage.
- Protect 1,200 families from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care costs.
- Allow 73,000 young adults to obtain coverage on their parents’ insurance plans.
- Provide millions of dollars in new funding for 47 community health centers.

- Reduce the cost of uncompensated care for hospitals and other health care providers by \$68 million annually.

This fiscally responsible bill will also dramatically reduce the deficit and skyrocketing health care costs. The bill cuts the deficit by nearly \$1.3 trillion over the next 20 years. In order to get our economy back on track we must bring down our mounting national deficit and lower costs for small businesses. This bill does that while expanding and improving health care coverage for millions of American families.